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Designation Would Increase Access to Federal Transportation Aid, Lead to Economic Development Along Utica-Rome Corridor

UTICA, NY -At a press conference today, U.S. Rep. Michael Arcuri (NY-24) was joined by New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Acting Commissioner Stanley Gee, NYS Assemblywoman RoAnn Destito (D-Rome) and other state and local officials to announce efforts to designate a portion of State Route 49 as part of the Federal Interstate Highway System. This designation will make the route eligible for additional funds to improve the flow of commerce, enhance driving conditions for business commuters, and lead to economic growth along the corridor.

"The designation of State Route 49 as a Federal Interstate Highway would increase access to additional federal funding," **said Arcuri who sits on the House Transportation Subcommittee on Highways and Transit.** "Additionally, the designation of this vital stretch of highway would increase the marketability of our local businesses, colleges, and defense sector and become a real catalyst for economic development and job creation in the region. Introducing this legislation is the first step to inclusion into the upcoming Highway Bill."

NYSDOT Acting Commissioner Stanley Gee said, "State Route 49, also called the Utica-Rome Expressway, is an eleven-mile link between the cities of Utica and Rome and is critical to the economic sustainability of the area. The designation of this corridor as Interstate 790 will improve mobility in the area, enhance the potential for business growth, and strengthen national defense development."

"Designating State Route 49 as a Federal Interstate Highway would improve access to valuable economic development sites, in Utica, to the Marcy Nanocenter site, and to the Griffiss Business and Technology Park," **said Assemblywoman Destito.** "It also greatly improves our region's share of federal highway funding, which can be used for future highway projects to boost the marketability of the Utica to Rome corridor."

Arcuri will seek to designate an 11 mile portion of State Route 49 which serves as an east-west connection between the Cities of Rome and Utica as I-790. Designating this section would further the long-term vision of an Interstate "loop" between New York State Thruway (I-90) exit 31 in Utica and exit 33 in Verona traveling through the City of Rome.

Primary exits along this proposed section of interstate would improve access to facilities such as the business and military applications at the Griffiss Business and Technology Park in Rome, NYS prison facilities, multiple warehouse distribution centers, the future Nanocenter in Marcy, and the SUNY-IT campus in the City of Utica.

Introduction of this legislation is part of a longer-term plan by Arcuri to include the designation language into the Highway Bill, which the House Transportation Committee is expected to consider later this year.

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